

IT'S time the Berks and Bucks Football Association gave Wycombe Wanderers a fair deal.

For the last three years, Wycombe have applied to the county F.A. for permission to enter the London Senior Cup. On each occasion it has been refused. The reason given last year was the change in the players' status — understandable as precious few people knew just what was going on in the world of amateur football at that time. Wanderers must have felt that way, too, for they accepted the decision amiably.

But they also must have felt they had a good case for being granted permission this year. After all, they had put Wycombe Wanderers, High Wycombe and the Berks and Bucks F.A. well and truly on the map by beating Bournemouth and holding Middlesbrough at Loakes Park. Even the television cameras were there to see the match against Jack Charlton's boys. Prestige . . . glory . . . and a feather in the cap all round.

And yet, the Berks and Bucks have again said no. And this time, they didn't even give the club a reason . . . they just refused.

Personally, I just couldn't believe there was no reason for denying the county's leading club a request they had submitted for three years running. So I telephoned the secretary Charles Twelftree. What, I asked, was the reason for the refusal.

He told me the matter had been put before a full meeting of the council, which consists of just under 30 men. The matter was discussed and the council then voted on the issue. The result was close (Mr. Twelftree would not quote figures) and the majority voted against it.

Fair enough, I thought. But there still must be some reason

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why the council voted against it. The only answer Mr. Twelftree could give was this: Berks and Bucks are not, he said, an overlapping county. That means it does not overlap into the 15 mile radius of the London F.A. who run the London Senior Cup. If counties do overlap, they are entitled to enter the competition. But, he added, some counties do allow their clubs to enter the London Senior even though they are outside that 15 mile radius. The Hertfordshire F.A., for instance, permit their senior clubs to enter.

Therefore, it all boils down to the fact that the matter is completely up to the group of individuals who are on the council.

What can Wycombe do about it? Well, they do not have a member of the club on the council at the moment. If they had, they might have been able to state their view. But even so, I still can't fathom out what the B and B have against Wycombe entering this competition.

Perhaps it could be they fear Wanderers will drop out of the county Senior Cup. Blues secretary Bert Crump assured me they would still compete and they wanted to enter the London Senior Cup as well. Bert feels the London Senior has grown into a strong competition with almost all the major clubs taking part. He also thinks that matches against Enfield, Ilford, Wimbledon, to name but a few, would attract good crowds to Loakes Park.

All in all, it seems everyone must benefit from the move. Wanderers would have more in-

teresting matches hence more value to the supporters, the club would gain financially from the gates while the Berks and Bucks F.A. would have a good chance of even more prestige if Wycombe were successful in the competition.

All the facts say there is no reason why Wycombe should not enter. The Berks and Bucks have yet to come up with a satisfactory answer. Perhaps they don't want to lose their 'power', perhaps they think Wycombe would abuse the Senior Cup. Who knows?

I think the county F.A. should take a long, hard look at their decision and realise just what they are doing. To my mind they are stifling the interests of not only Wycombe Wanderers but the thousands who support them each year. The Berks and Bucks have a lot to be thankful for from Wycombe. They are their most successful club, they allow them to use their facilities for county matches and in the past, they have supplied the county with the bulk of their senior playing squad.

Add that to the success and prestige won by Wanderers over the last six years and it's baffling to see why the county F.A. are refusing a simple request.

The Berks and Bucks F.A. should realise that football is a matter of co-operation. In our county it seems that has broken down at the moment.

I have tried to see both sides of the argument but to my mind, the Berks and Bucks have yet to put forward a reasonable excuse. They seem adamant in their attitude — an attitude I feel could do the game much harm.

● Stuart Earp